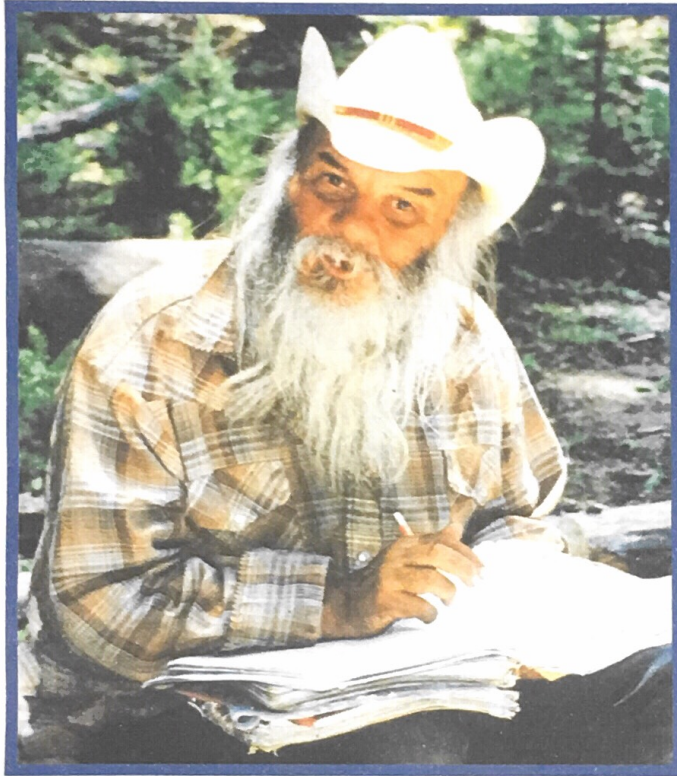




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.*

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JERRY - "I Want to Put Out  
Energy"

-interviewed at the Oregon Gathering  
in 1978

8 pages

[05.L]



JERRY - I want to Put Out Energy

[Jerry was my introduction to really knowing Rainbow people. I met him in August, 1975 when he was living in his camper in Oro's yard outside of Stillwater, Oklahoma, after the Arkansas Gathering. Jerry and Mimi and I headed for California in the camper in October. We ran low on gas and went to Reserve, New Mexico. We stayed there with Grasshopper in Jay Sun and Feather's house so Feather could take Shawn, who was a baby, and go be with Jay Sun at the tree-thinning camp in the mountains. We got construction jobs - the first I had ever had in my life and Jerry helped me have the self-confidence for the jobs, in spite of my complete inexperience.]

JERRY

I was born November 14, 1951, in Kentucky. My father was in the Service when I was born. He met my mother while he was in Germany and she came back with him. My grandparents came over five years later. My dad is part Cherokee. His great-grandfather was a chief.

I couldn't speak fluent English until I was seven because my mother and her parents always talked to me in German. It wasn't until I was in the first grade they realized they had to talk to me in English.

My father after he got out of the service, he first worked for a factory. Then in 1957, he got a job with the Los Angeles Police Department. He was a policeman until 1977.

My mom was very strictly Catholic. I went to public school, but I went to catechism class every week. My mother took me to church every Sunday. My father never went. Twice I served as an altar boy. I didn't care for it at all, because up until a couple of years ago, they spoke Roman in church and I never understood what they were saying. But the whole time I was home, I always went to church.

In junior high and high school, I used to drop pens and pencils on the floor so I could look up girls' dresses when I bent down to pick



them up. I was always getting in trouble. I cut classes all the time. I used to write my own excuse notes. There was one lady who could catch me at it and she only caught me twice. I was in all kinds of sports in high school - cross-country running. I never came in past third in all the years I raced. I was always third or better. When I was a sophomore in high school, I broke the senior record and my record wasn't broke until a few years ago. The first dope I ever tried, I took some mescaline. I smoked pot after that. I was 17 before I tried my first acid in 1969.

I left home when I graduated from high school in 1969 and moved to Laguna Beach. I lived in a place a millionaire owned. He wouldn't let no one but freaks stay there. He owned another place he would only let straight people stay in on the other side of town. He would come in your room and steal your dope and say, "I told you not to be dealing." He wouldn't take mine. I caught him in my room once and I told him I'd take his balls and hang them from the wall. Then I went to San Clemente.

I lived by dealing. I worked part-time jobs, but the best money was in dealing. For every one year I deal, I age ten years. I had stomach acid burns. I had to drink a lot of milk. It was a strain. Dealing got too hot. I moved and two weeks later the place I lived in was busted. Some people came from Virginia to visit a friend of mine and they wanted to buy some pot. I told them it was getting pretty hot where I was, so they got me and my girlfriend to go back to central Virginia with them. I didn't know these people at all.

It was rough when I got to Virginia. I started working as a hospital orderly. I didn't sell any dope because I didn't know nobody. I didn't have any transportation. After a year, I went to a black farmer and asked how much it would cost to live in a house he had. He said, "I'll think about it" and then he said I could live there for nothing - on a 600 acre valley farm. I worked for



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him and dealt pot.

I went to the Vortex Festival the Rainbow Family had in Oregon in 1970. I loved it. I didn't know the Rainbow Family put it on. I found a dog there that I took home and named Vortex.

There was a guy named Peter in Virginia who was somehow related to the Rainbow Family. He put up posters around Virginia in 1972 saying that there was a Rainbow Gathering in Granby, Colorado, and he went getting together a caravan to go to it. So we did.

When I got to Granby, the roads were all blocked. They weren't letting nobody in. Some people came down to the parking lot from the gathering and they said they needed a lot of medical supplies and they needed a lot of fruit. They needed a volunteer to sneak it in a back pack and I volunteered. I took their money and went to a drug store in Granby and bought \$200 worth of medical supplies. The girl who worked there asked me how I was going to get it up to the gathering and I said I didn't know. She said she had a boyfriend in the next town over and he had a speed boat. I went where he was at and he showed me on the map how he would take me across a lake on his speed boat to the foot of a trail to Strawberry Lake where the gathering was. The trail was on private land and they couldn't bother us. So we made it in that way with the medicine and the fruit.

The gathering was hard to believe. It had seven kitchens. I set up my own kitchen. It was called the Yellow Dragon. I served as many as 700 people for breakfast every morning. My big hit was somebody gave me the ingredients for rice pudding with a recipe for six people. So I multiplied the amounts in the recipe and made it for 700. I had three big pots from the Love Family that I cooked it in. I used a 50 pound bag of rice and I don't know how much other ingredients and it came out good. People asked me to make it again and I couldn't.

After the Colorado Gathering, I went to Mexico as far as Yucatán. When you take off your shoes down in Mexico, you can feel the energy in the ground that Mexico has. I had so much dope that I brought



down there in my pack, I had to give it away. And also when I found out what the law was. The further you get down in Mexico, the worse the law gets. I've seen them walk up to American freaks and say, "Well, since this is yours, how much are you gonna pay to get out of trouble?" I learned enough Spanish to ask for dope and for - well, you know. In Mexico I tried a lot of coke. Cola is best for sex, but I've chopped wood and cut down trees on it. I've only been shot up four times in my life - with medicine by a nurse. I'm very paranoid about needles. I snorted heroin once and that was because there was nothing I hadn't tried. I think heroin sucks, personally. Anybody who tries it is a fool.

I stayed in Mexico until May, 1973, and I left to go to the gathering in Wyoming. The sheriff at Lander, Wyoming, Pee Wee, was a great guy. There was a lot of bad publicity coming out of Cheyenne about the gathering, and he was getting a lot of feedback about how he ought to do this and ought to do that. They wanted to bring in the National Guard, but he told me, "Hell, I'm the sheriff here. If they think I'm gonna do this, they can find a new sheriff." I said I was going into town to get supplies and take a bath. And he let four of us go to the police station and shower. We sat on the police station counter waiting to shower and the deputy couldn't do nothing about it. All he could do was tell us not to take our knives in back when we went to shower.

From Lander I went to northern California to see some of the Rainbow Family in Mendocino. I stayed there about a month and from there I went back to Virginia. I bought a piece of land from Mr. Harris, the black farmer I did up hay and fed cattle for.

The next gathering was in Utah, 1974. I hitched to that one. The townspeople around there came up and told us we were in their drinking water at the lake. That was a crock of shit unless they liked drinking oil slicks, because there was speedboats all over the water making oil slicks. Then they came up with some health inspectors and said we were gonna have to pay \$2 a piece for some



hepatitis shots and I said I wasn't going to pay \$2 for a shot. I got a ride out of there with a girl who said she lived in the little town and she said, "That's a bunch of bull shit. This isn't our town water where you all are camped. Our town water is on the other side of the mountain, and we don't allow boats on it except with electric motors."

After that I went back to Virginia. I did all kinds of work there and mostly dealt. Dealing as I do, it is an honorably, honestly and illegally operation.

When I went to the Arkansas Gathering in 1965, they had one place already planned and even on the invitation. I was lucky because when I got to the state of Arkansas, I asked at a ranger station 100 miles from the gathering place and they told me it had been changed. I got there after the arrests. After Arkansas, I went on the caravan to Stillwater in my pickup. The caravan was something, man. I loved it. We came to Yellville, Arkansas where they had arrested the people during the gathering. We decided the town was dirty and we were gonna clean it up. So we bought a lot of trash bags and tried to clean up the town. The sheriff came up to us and said, "You know you all are passing in the wind if you think this will change people's opinions of you." But we put invitations for the people to come for a dinner we fixed in the park and we fed them and sang for them and left a good impression.

Then we went into Stillwater, Oklahoma. I know we had an impact on the town. There's no doubt about that. Women, children, adults, people of all ages, we had an impact. When we first got there, we had a whole lot of hassle. We went to Lake Carl Blackwell, west of Stillwater. A lot of people on the caravan didn't want to do things. The people who wanted to do things and put out energy and I was one of them were exhausted. Too many people wanted to go for a free ride. I was working construction - anything I could find, I couldn't be choosy - and turning my pay check over to the Family. I trusted they would make the payments on my pickup.

The best thing that happened there was I met Oro. She came out to our camp at the lake and met us. We did all kinds of things for



her OM Cooking restaurant. Oro paid back by loving us. A lot of us got free meals there, but I didn't eat there often. We painted the place and did a lot of remodeling. There was a couple of dingalings in the Family that got locked up a couple of times, but in general the people in the town were friendly to us.

After the city of Stillwater made us move from Lake Carl Blackwell, we moved onto Oro's land around her house. Then this guy let us stay at his land in Horse Thief Canyon, which was a beautiful place. Then some Osage Indians offered to let us stay on their land. I voted for us to go there, because the people who didn't have their trip together would have to get it together or out they would go. Just as a part of the caravan, I couldn't put them out, but the Indians could. But we didn't go to the Osage land.

I went back to Virginia to get my horse because he was breaking out of the fence and going into people's gardens, so I had to go back and put up all new fence. Then I came back to Stillwater and I went to Reserve, New Mexico, to see Jay Sun and Feather. I worked with a contractor named Charlie building a church. It was a beautiful church when it was finished. I was making \$175 a week - better than almost anybody in the whole town. The forestry land comes all the way down to the edge of Reserve, and the people don't have no land.

Reserve is in Catron County, New Mexico, the biggest county in New Mexico, and it only has about 3,000 people in the whole county. It's one of the least touched by man of any place I've ever been. You can go right out of town and pick up old Indian arrowheads and pottery pieces. The nearest lake is 100 miles over dirt road. I went there to go fishing. In Reserve, at the Chicano bar, they wouldn't let me dance with the young girls, just with these three older women. They were huge, but they were very kind ladies. One of these mamas fixed me the best Mexican food I ever had.

I didn't purposely leave Reserve. I was working up in the mountains, thinning trees in the national forest. This old couple let me use their cabin



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near Reserve. I had a deal set up with a guy in Tucson. I let Kilo and Marsha stay in the cabin while I went to Tucson. About 20 miles outside of Tucson, the crankshaft broke in the truck. I had to stay in Tucson for three weeks until the people I was going to do the deal with gave me the money to go back to Virginia.

In Virginia I was supposed to wait for the people in the pot deal and they never came, which was great. Then I went to California for two months to see my parents. I went back to Virginia to get ready to go to the Montana Gathering, and I had spent so much money on the dope deal and it never came through, so I didn't go. It was July 2, I had my pack packed. The invitation to the gathering said don't bring my dog, I didn't have much money. I was so bummed out. I waited on the highway for a ride for half an hour. Then I went back to my cabin in the mountains and sat on the porch a long time. I drank a lot of beer and shot off firecrackers. I wish I hadn't missed it. I don't think I'll miss any more gatherings.

Then I got a job building a nuclear power plant. It was the only job there was, there was no other jobs to get. They paid \$9 an hour and it was in the middle of winter. Sure, I felt strange. But it was the worst winter in 100 years and there was no work. People picketed the plant that spring. Didn't bother me. All I had to do was, my boss would tell me go hide some place and get high.

I was there until the New Mexico Gathering. I hitched to it. From the gathering I went to Tucson on a school bus. That's just where everybody was going. I was there a month. Then I went back to Virginia. Since then, I've been working for myself. I've got a bulldozer and a flat bed truck and I've been making roads for people and clearing sites for houses way back in the mountains, doing my own private contracting. My bulldozer's a neat piece of machinery. I've made lakes with it and swimming pools with it.

There's no way you can say one gathering is more together



than another. Each gathering has its own problems from the land situation. Each gathering has been better than the others in one way or another.

I'm living in the East and I think it's about time they had a gathering east of the Mississippi. I think it sucks that all of them are in the West. They've been talking about having it in the East ever since Colorado, but I don't listen to them no more. There's places in Virginia that are every bit as secluded as in the West. There are places in North Carolina a hundred miles from a town.

I brought in 50 pounds of whole wheat flour, 50 pounds of unbleached white flour and 50 pounds of rice to this year's gathering in Oregon for the kitchen. I have visions of the Rainbow Family. The Family means more to me than anything else there is on this planet. It's hard to use words, what it means to me.

I'll be glad when we don't go by time any more like, "It's 20 minutes until —". When we quit all the minutes and say, "Oh, that happened just after the horn was blowing or when the donkey brayed."

[I interviewed Jerry at the Oregon Gathering where he was camped next to Oro. He has not been to any national Rainbow Gatherings since then, although he visited Jayson and Feather in 1979 and 1981.]